



Childhood Connections

September 4, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success. It is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of [the Early Connections webpage](#).



Photo Credit: Missouri State University Free Marketing Photos

This month’s Road to Success highlights Missouri State University (MSU) in Springfield. Their College of Education offers several minors and certificates for those interested in working with children that allow them to personalize and specialize their degree for their interests.

The Early Childhood Education major leads to Missouri teacher certification for ages birth through third grade, allowing graduates to work as a teacher or instructor in early childhood settings, including public schools. Students in this track have the option to do a year-long student teaching experience in Springfield, St. Louis, or Kansas City through the Internship Academy. The College also offers a major in Child and Family Development that prepares students to work with children and families in early learning settings that do not require certification. This major has four tracks that allow students to focus their education in a particular area. Students can choose from Child Development, Child Life, Family Studies, or Youth Development track options.

Undergraduates at MSU have multiple options for certificates and minors to complement their major. The College of Education offers the following undergraduate certificates: Environmental STEM for Teachers, Family and Juvenile Support Services, Infant and Toddler Development, Working with

Families, Working with Preschoolers, and International Perspectives in K-12 Special Education.

They also offer five minors: Child and Family Development, General Family and Consumer Sciences, Literacy, Sign Language Studies, and Special Education. These optional programs help students develop specialized skills that set them apart in the job market.

Hello Dolly! Missouri welcomes Dolly Parton to celebrate the Imagination Library



Photo Credit: DESE Communications



REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda and the other presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

SAVE THE DATE! 2025 MO Division of Early Childhood Conference

The Missouri Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) will host the 2025 MODEC Annual Conference in Columbia, Missouri on **February 20-21, 2025.**

Presenters for the 2025 DEC Conference are needed! If you have an innovative idea, exciting collaborations, or effective practices from your classroom or program, please share

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was honored and excited to welcome Dolly Parton to Kansas City, Missouri on August 27, 2024. Dolly joined invited guests at [the Folly Theater](#) to celebrate the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri, which was made possible through Section 178.694, RSMo., and \$11 million included in DESE's Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 budgets.

While on stage, Dolly spoke about beginning the program in her home county in Tennessee, in honor of her father, and discussed the growth and impact the program has had on children all over the world. She then delighted the audience by singing a few songs.

The [livestream provided by Kansas City PBS](#) can be viewed on their YouTube channel.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available for every child ages birth to 5 years in Missouri. A parent or guardian can register their child on [the Imagination Library national webpage](#). Books will be mailed directly to the home of registered children at no cost to the family.

NEW! First Steps Testing Data Review

OOE Early Intervention staff completed a data review of Developmental Assessment of Young Children – second edition (DAYC-2) scores from July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. The DAYC-2 is given to children with a suspected developmental delay referred to First Steps. The assessment assists with eligibility determination for the First Steps program.

OOE reviewed the data for potential impacts to the Early Intervention program if eligibility criteria changed.

Seventy percent of System Points of Entry (SPOE) offices and 2,758 records were reviewed. The impact if the half-age delay eligibility criteria was lowered and if standard scores replaced age equivalency were considered. The report also included comparisons to other state's criteria and the financial impacts to the program.

Next steps include analyzing more data and investigating provider availability.

this with others in the field. Sessions will run for one hour and thirty minutes.

Proposals can be emailed to modescped@gmail.com. Presentation proposals must be submitted by **September 16, 2024**

RESOURCE! Folly Theater Kids' Series

The Folly Theatre, located in Kansas City, MO, provides the Folly Kids' Series. This is an education-enriching program now entering its 43rd season of serving young scholars ranging in age from Pre-K through 8th grade.

Each show has a specific recommended age range, depending on the content and subject matter of the programming. Tickets are \$6 each.

The Folly Theater works with area foundations and corporate partners to help underwrite the cost of tickets and bus transportation for students attending Title I schools.

A professional, national touring children's theater company performs at each production. A study guide also accompanies each production to help teachers incorporate themes and concepts from the show into their classroom instruction.

To read the full report, visit [the Early Intervention Testing Date Review webpage](#).

ANNOUNCEMENT! Serious Injury and Death Reporting in Child Care

The [electronic form for child care providers to report serious injuries or deaths](#) of children in care has been updated. OOC summarizes the collected data annually to provide a consumer education report.

You can view [the Missouri Childhood Death and Serious Injury Report](#) for the July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, reporting period.

More information about reporting requirements can be found on [the Child Care Development Fund webpage](#).

ANNOUNCEMENT! MIECHV Home Visiting is Expanding this Fall!

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Programs are expanding in the 2024-2025 contract year, which runs from September 30, 2024, to September 29, 2025, to serve over 80 additional Missouri families.

Home visiting services will be offered in Jackson, Carter, Reynolds, Shannon, and Wayne counties that were identified as at-risk counties in the 2020 Updated MIECHV Needs Assessment. Ripley county and St. Louis City will also expand their existing services.

These home visiting services will be provided by established agencies using the Early Head Start – Home Based Option, Healthy Families America, Nurse Family Partnership, or the Parents as Teachers evidence-based home visiting models.

To learn more visit [the Home Visiting webpage](#).

UPDATE! Missouri Early Learning Standards Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten Alignment Tool

The OOC has recently added the Missouri Early Learning Standards Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten Alignment tool to [the Missouri Early Learning Standards \(MELS\) webpage](#).

To learn more visit [the Folly Kids' Series webpage](#).

NEW! SUBSIDY PAYMENT CALCULATION

To help address frequent questions about how a subsidy payment is calculated, OOC developed [this subsidy payment calculation information](#).

The document describes each step in the process used to make subsidy payments and includes three examples.

Check out [the child care subsidy rates and sliding fees](#) for more information.

REMINDER! LEAD-K Parent Resources

OOC is excited to announce [the Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids \(LEAD-K\) webpage](#) is live and located on the Early Connections webpage.

[House Bill \(HB\) 447, Section 161.396](#), established the Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids Program.

The purpose of the program is to promote kindergarten readiness to ensure children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have a strong language foundation to be ready for school.

This tool provides clear connections between skills and competencies related to young children's development and learning as outlined in the MELs, the Kindergarten Missouri Learning Standards (MLS), and other key learning standards (both assessed and non-assessed) that are applied in Missouri public kindergarten classrooms.

The goal of the tool is to provide a clear understanding of the links between critical developmental milestones and learning expectations of children *at the end of* pre-kindergarten *and the beginning of* kindergarten. It will help educators strengthen awareness of a child's developmental and learning to support successful transitions during these key early learning transition points.

The updated webpage also includes [a webinar](#) (16 min.) explaining how this tool can be a valuable resource for child care providers and school districts.

Missouri is working to assist families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing through the LEAD-K Act.

Find more resources on [milestones for American Sign Language \(ASL\) and English language and literacy milestones for children birth to 5 years of age](#).

UPDATE! Childhood Community Leaders

Childhood community leaders are local community members who develop and implement strong plans aimed at ensuring all families with young children can access high-quality programs, services, and resources. They also bring local stakeholders together to increase awareness and coordination among early childhood programs and services. Childhood community leaders elevate the importance of early childhood services and help their communities ensure that all children are safe, healthy, and successful learners.

Read [the 2024 Childhood Community Leader Stakeholder Survey Summary](#) to see what local stakeholders are saying about this work. Also, visit [the Early Connections webpage](#) to see a map of the counties served by community leaders and to read each region's local early childhood plan and most recent quarterly report.

To get involved in childhood community leader work and engage with other programs and services, use the contact information on each region's webpage to reach out to the childhood community leaders in that area.

SAVE THE DATE! Conference on the Young Years

The 52nd Conference on the Young Years (CYY) will be **March 6-8, 2025**, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri.

There is a great lineup of keynote and featured speakers along with many breakout session presenters. Vendors & exhibitors may now reserve their booth space for CYY 2025. Sponsorships are also available.

To learn more about the 2025 conference visit our [CYY webpage](#).

RESOURCE! Lead Poisoning Prevention in Missouri

Did you know that Missouri is the number one lead-producing state in the United States?

Missouri has a mining history, with mining occurring in 60 of the 114 counties beginning before Missouri was even a state. Mining waste has been used for driveways, fill material, and children's play areas. Lead mined in Missouri was used in products like, bullets, keys, mini blinds, batteries, and in the past, added to paint and gasoline.

Fine particles of processed, recycled lead, and/or lead dust can become a health hazard when taken into the body through breathing or swallowing. Due to Missouri's high lead poisoning risk, Missouri encourages blood lead testing for families.

If you have additional questions on the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, please visit [DHSS's Lead Poisoning webpage](#). Emails can be sent to Teresa.Wortmann@health.mo.gov or Maggie.Burns@health.mo.gov. By phone, dial 573-751-6102.

RESOURCE! Disaster Preparedness Guidebooks for Individuals with Disabilities and Service Providers

Disasters and emergencies can happen quickly and without warning, leaving limited response time. Being prepared before the disaster occurs can help individuals respond quickly and appropriately.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) has created two guidebooks: *Disaster Preparedness: Individual Planning Guide* and *Disaster Preparedness: Provider Planning Guide*.

Additionally, there are video guides with concepts taken directly from the individual and provider planning guides.

Learn more about at [the Disaster Preparedness Guidebooks webpage](#) for those with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

NEW! Relief Funds Monitoring Activities

A summary of the activities that OOC and its vendors use for fiscal and programmatic monitoring of child care relief funds is [available online](#).

Check out [the Closed Funding Opportunities webpage](#) for a list of the awarded grants paid with child care relief funds.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Credit: the Missouri Head Start Association

A meeting was hosted by the Missouri Head Start Association, with facilitation services provided by the Missouri Community Action Network in early 2024 entitled, *Head Start & Child Welfare: Partnering to Support Children and Families*. The goal was to better understand areas of commonality, places of opportunity, and strategies to strengthen partnerships.

This committee included representatives from the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division; Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Office of Childhood; Region VII Office of Head Start; Region VII Training & Technical Assistance System; University of Missouri Department of Human Development & Family Science; Missouri Community Action Network, Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office, and Missouri Head Start Association.

Representatives attending the meeting identified strategies for strengthening partnerships in their communities. This included strategies to approach partnership development with intentionality and leverage resources to support

families. Attendees also worked on strategies to engage and include Head Start in the child's care while in state custody, promote the understanding of poverty, and establish shared messaging on the transformation of Missouri's child welfare system.

Effective partnerships between Head Start and the Children's Division improve the lives of children and families they mutually serve. Working together, Head Start and the Children's Division support the safety, consistency, and well-being of young children and families.

Of the collaboration Stacey Wright, Director of Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office said, "When Head Start and Child Welfare agencies work well together, everyone benefits—Head Start and Early Head Start programs, child welfare agencies, and, most importantly, children and their families. Building successful partnerships requires time, effort, human resources, and at times, fiscal resources. The Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office was excited to witness first-hand the passion and commitment of these agencies and their willingness to strengthen their cooperation and collaboration moving forward."

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the August 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [July 2024](#)
- [June 2024](#)
- [May 2024](#)
- [April 2024](#)
- [March 2024](#)
- [February 2024](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, September 24, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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